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DISCOURSE ABOUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN TOURISM—AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC POLICY, PLANNING, AND IMPLEMENTATION IN AUSTRALIA AND SCOTLAND: HOT AIR OR MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

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This article addresses the contribution of the policy formulation process in driving agendas relating to workforce development in the tourism sectors of Australia and Scotland. This discussion represents an exploratory study that seeks to fill a clear conceptual and empirical gap in the extant literature. The discussion is located within wider consideration of the role of public and private sector stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation as a manifestation of active labor market policy engagement. Using a process of systematic documentary analysis, the study considers public policy reports and implementation strategies published in Australia (24) and Scotland (34) between 2000 and 2012 and focuses on the role of key actors, methodologies employed, and the recommendations that arise within each report. Conclusions relating to the process of stakeholder engagement and its relative ineffectiveness are drawn.

Key words: Active labor market policy (ALMP); Employment; Workforce development; Human resource development; Tourism; Australia; Scotland

Introduction

Workforce issues are crucial supply-side concerns that will determine the future competitiveness of service-based economies. As such, they engage the interest of a wide range of stakeholders including governments, NGOs, social partners, major industry operators, trade bodies representing private sector employers, educational providers, and academic researchers (Baum & Szivas, 2008). In this article, the terms “workforce” and “workforce development” (WD) are used interchangeably in full awareness that more common reference is to human resource development (HRD). While HRD

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is frequently employed within a specific business context, WD is more generally used in reference to people and employment at a community, regional, or national level.

The interest in workforce matters is of particular pertinence in the context of tourism. Tourism, it is widely argued, faces systemic and intractable workforce challenges relating to, among many issues, the sector's status as an employer, problems in recruitment and failure to retain good employees, the impact of stochastic demand on career opportunities, remuneration, workplace conditions, and employee participation (see, e.g., Baum, 2007; Hoque, 2000). As a consequence, tourism faces labor market competitiveness challenges with particular nuances across time and space, which differentiate it from others sectors of the economy. Thus, these challenges are addressed differently across countries, jurisdictions and economies—engaging processes and actors that reflect national and local priorities and conditions. As argued by Richter (1989), and more recently by Airey and Ruhanen (2014), the degree to which tourism succeeds or fails can be significantly influenced by political and administrative actions (not only local economic or business expertise). Like Richter, we agree that thorough reviews and examinations of policy and influences on policy can provide important dialogue the subsequently improved tourism outcomes.

In this article, we explore how the WD discourse has developed in tourism since the turn of the century from a policy perspective in two contrasting contexts: Australia and Scotland. This is a wholly neglected area of research in conceptual and methodological terms. Much that has been written about national WD in tourism is of a contextualized case study nature and frames a particular, time-bound, snapshot (see, e.g., Farver's, 1984 study of The Gambia; Esichaikul and Baum's 1998 research in Thailand; and Zhang and Wu's 2004 study relating to China). Indeed, one of our concerns is the failure of both policy makers and researchers to build meaningful trend data about the tourism workforce in a particular destination or country. Perhaps the one notable exception to this has been a series of studies undertaken on a biannual basis in Ireland from the late 1970s to the present (see, e.g., CERT, 1985, 1997; Fáilte Ireland, 2011; Fitzpatrick Associates/Fáilte Ireland, 2005). The current study is innovative and exploratory in the sense that little or no work has been undertaken with respect to WD policy in tourism over a longitudinal time frame or on a comparative basis. This study makes an important contribution to our understanding of whether policy engagement in tourism WD makes a difference or is, indeed, mere "hot air."

Our consideration of selected policy discourses relating to tourism WD in both Australia and Scotland, as represented through key stakeholder analysis (emanating from the work of Freeman, 1984, and others) of policy and related position statements, is informed by important theoretical contextual frames: stakeholder engagement in tourism workforce development as a contribution to active labor market policies (ALMPs); and the role of low skills, service work within contemporary high skills/knowledge-aspirant, postindustrial economies. We address these interrelated themes through a systematic analysis of public policy reports and implementation strategies on tourism WD, published in these two contrasting political, economic, and tourism sector environments, Australia and Scotland, between 2000 and 2012. We use these sources to reach conclusions with respect to: the key concerns and themes that underpin the origins of the studies; the role of key actors; the methodologies employed to underpin analysis; the recommendations that are placed on the table and where these are targeted; and the action processes that were identified for adoption. This, in turn, allows us to reach conclusions with respect to the value of policy and implementation strategies for WD in tourism.

WD Policy and Practice

The roles and responsibilities of public and private sector stakeholders in workforce policy, planning, development, and implementation are diverse. For one, educational and training processes range from preschool to vocational, higher and lifelong learning provision. In turn, these processes facilitate access for the private and public sectors to the quantity and quality of skills required for the development and growth of the economy; encourage skills enhancement as a tool within economic restructuring and recalibration; encourage inward investment through moves to stimulate high skills, knowledge-based, or service-focused economies

(see, e.g., Lloyd & Payne, 2004); and put in place policies and programs that maximize employment opportunity and minimize unemployment and underemployment within the economy, thus enhancing social inclusion. This is, clearly, a wide-ranging WD agenda and is one that can present real challenges in balancing conflicting pressures from the range of stakeholder interests.

Fundamentally, government management of key components within the national labor market, whether light touch or of a more directive or active nature, generally aspires to forging enhanced prosperity for the largest possible number within society. Improving human capacity and capability within the community and, specifically, among those of economically productive age, is crucial within this process and can have benefits beyond national boundaries. While referring specifically to the knowledge-based economy context, Rangel (2004) argues that "a better trained and educated labour force increases productivity and the capacity for better understanding among nations based on educated tolerance and respect, fostering free international trade and competitive development of specific industries" (p. 374). This is the outcome for which most governments strive, notwithstanding the somewhat aspirational nature of the statement in a low skills workforce context.

Labor Market Policies and the Role of the State

The role of the state within the employment domain can be framed in terms of the extent to which labor market policies are more or less active. Laissez-faire policies minimize the role of government interventions in areas of skills development and employment creation (Alvarez & Veracierto, 2000). By contrast, managed ALMPs have their origins in Sweden in the 1950s (Swenson, 2002). They are designed to support economic and social policy (Bonoli, 2010) that responds to the needs of stakeholders on both the supply and demand sides of the labor market by supporting the mechanisms for those seeking employment to acquire the necessary skills and opportunity in order to gain work and by enabling employers to access the number and quality (skills) of employees that they require. While Daguerre and Etherington (2009) define ALMPs purely in terms of measures to bring the economically inactive back into the workforce, Bonoli (2010) makes reference to two schools of thought and action with respect to ALMPs—those that are about improving human capital as well as those that are negative incentives to move people into employment. Clearly, the notion of WD locates it within the first of these, although tourism has also played a role in enabling the latter by providing low-cost, quick fix "solutions" to situations of high unemployment, as was certainly the case in the pre-Celtic Tiger Ireland of the 1980s and early 1990s (Walsh, 1993). Arguably, this has also been an underpinning theme in discussions about the tourism's role in job creation in Scotland since 2008.

ALMPs can represent a tension between the economic and social objectives of the state. Rueda's (2007) interpretation, for example, is that "ALMPs are designed to promote entry into the labour market of outsiders who will underbid insiders' wage demands" (p. 74). This may be achieved through skills enhancement for those outside of the current workforce in order to enable them to compete more effectively for jobs, as is the intention of the range of training and employment subsidy programs enacted in times of economic downturn (Boyle, 2005). This interpretation is also manifest through widening the pool from which employers are able to draw at times of full employment. In the context of this analysis, the Australian Government's (2012) recent announcement that "hotels, motels, serviced apartments and other tourism accommodation providers across the Northern Territory, Broome, Kangaroo Island, Tropical North Queensland and the Whitsundays will be able to employ seasonal labour from Pacific countries and East Timor" is a good exemplar. The Australian policy change is ostensibly a response to service sector labor shortages in regions directly affected by competition from the booming resources sector. However, it can also be seen as a "subsidy" to employers unwilling or unable to pay the competitive market rate within the affected communities for the skills they require.

Our interest, in this article, is in WD at a macro-level within a specific sector (tourism), which, arguably, delivers a "slicing" of the notion of WD that draws on both organizational and the wider economic, political, and social context of national WD. This is not an entirely new concept as there is an extended pedigree that goes back at least as

far as the 1980s in tourism (see, e.g., Walsh, 1993). In other areas of the economy, sectoral workforce planning has attracted the attention of policy makers, commentators, and researchers where sectors of strategic economic or social significance are concerned. Thus, the health and care sectors in developed and demographically changing countries have stimulated periodic analysis in support of recruitment, training, professional standards, and workplace conditions (e.g., Hughes, 2012; Karmel & Blomberg, 2009). Public sector reform, particularly in light of economic transformation or decline, has also been scrutinized in terms of its longer term workforce implications (e.g., O'Riordan, 2012, in the context of Ireland). Finally, sectors of major economic and strategic significance have also attracted the attention of those reflecting on workforce priorities—evident in agriculture (Rivera, 1995) or, in the specific Australian context, the resources sector, which provides a contemporary example (Karmel, 2007). Our contention is that these engagements constitute the manifestation of ALMPs, even though much of the ALMP literature neglects this policy and planning dimension.

The Place of WD in Tourism Policy, Planning, and Development

The literature implies widespread failure to recognize the workforce dimension in much tourism policy formulation, planning, development, and implementation (Liu & Wall, 2006). Baum (1994a, 1994b) had earlier highlighted this deficiency, and further argued that "the position of human resource concerns within the process of tourism policy formulation and implementation has not been subjected to widespread academic analysis" (Baum, 1994b, p. 259). Riley, Ladkin, and Szivas (2002), perhaps, provide a partial explanation for this in linking the impact on tourism planning to the dynamic nature of the sector's labor market in a developed country context. They note that

> in almost all sectors it is characterised by: occupational diversity; high proportions of young people—many in their first job; relatively low pay; an unreliable relationship between pay and tenure and between pay and skill; high levels of mobility of all types, but particularly inter-organisational mobility and upward mobility. (p. 16)

Fáilte Ireland (2005) makes a similar point in noting that

> tourism is a diverse and fragmented industry . . . diversity and small business scale are among the defining features of the sector. The culture of tourism is not collectivist and each sub-sector tends to think and operate in an autonomous manner so that the 'big picture', whether in terms of HRM, workforce development, or any other business function can sometimes remain concealed. (p. 13)

It is not the case, however, that tourism's labor markets and WD needs have been neglected in their own right, it is just that such analysis has frequently not been linked to wider tourism policy and development considerations. Deery (2006) highlights the failure of research in this area when she notes that "the Australian tourism workforce has been subject to a number of studies that, unfortunately, have often been done in isolation from other studies or have been 'one-off' studies" (p. 2). Workforce issues frequently inhabit a marginalized space within tourism planning, development, and marketing strategies, for which contributions abound as a consequence of the growth in importance of the sector in economic, cultural, and environmental terms.

Bespoke Tourism WD Strategies

In recognition of the limitations of this marginal positioning, it is of interest to note the emergence of an increasing number of bespoke national WD strategies for the tourism sector, designed largely to fill this gap. Some were directly spawned by recommendations contained within generic strategic plans in tourism; for example, that prepared in the Irish Republic (Fáilte Ireland, 2005), which owes its development specifically to Action 7.1 of the Report of the Tourism Policy Review Group (Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2003). Others represent the collective endeavor of an alliance of tourism industry interests, albeit with government support, illustrated by a plan for New Zealand (Tourism Industry Leadership Group, 2006). A third bespoke WD strategy model is where plans emerge within the context of international donor development support for the tourism sector and the wider economy. Examples include plans developed for Montenegro (GTZ, 2007) and Lao

PDR (Lao National Tourism Administration/Lux-Development, 2009). Interestingly, in the context of our analysis, there is also a bespoke Australian strategy (Service Skills Australia, 2009), which, similar to the Irish example above, is a direct offshoot of wider tourism strategy formulation (Australian Government, 2009).

Such bespoke reviews, valuable as they may be in representing the workforce climate at a particular moment in time, fail to tell the full story in context of what precedes them and, certainly, lack the sense that they will be reviewed and built upon in future iterations. Our purpose here is to explore evidence from such sources over a period of time, going some way towards providing a tool for the analysis of the tourism workforce debate, at national or regional level, in terms of its evolution; the economic and sectoral drivers of contributions to the conversation; the key actors and voices that can be heard; and the outcomes of the argument in the form of conclusions and recommendations from the policy documents.

Method of This Study

This study adopts a systematic approach to document analysis of policy and strategy-related reports that address WD and wider labor market themes, published in Australia and Scotland between 2000 and 2012. This body of documentation, all in the public domain, emanates from government, NGOs, and industry interest groups and focuses on policy, situational analysis, and lobbying. Our attention is on documentation that primarily emanates from a tourism sector workforce/employment/skills/training sources, although some of the Scottish reports are framed within the wider context of tourism but include workforce/employment/skills/training matters as a significant concern. In focusing on these sources, we are mindful that our scope does not extend to consideration of wider workforce analysis that may have considerable bearing on and implications for tourism (e.g., Australian Government, 2010). Our motivation was driven by the wish to drill deeper within a narrow frame of sources rather than aspire to comprehensive coverage of all possible sources.

In selecting documents for inclusion in this analysis, we were conscious that WD policy formulation, planning, and implementation strategies in tourism operate at a number of levels in most countries (pan-national, national, regional, and local). This is certainly the circumstance with both of our case examples (Australia and Scotland). The political structure of both jurisdictions has considerable influence on policy and implementation practice in an area such as WD, and our two case contexts are advisedly located very differently in this sense. To some extent, the choice of locations for this research was serendipitous, bringing together the work of two research teams who collaborated over common interests and negotiated to adopt similar methodological approaches at a local level. We recognize the challenges that consequent geographical, political, economic, jurisdictional, and cultural differences impose on any comparative analysis. Australia is a federal entity within which individual states and territories operate with considerable autonomy in political but also organizational terms, such as through state-based tourism ministries and industry associations. Operating on a much smaller scale, Scotland has a devolved administration that interacts with policies and initiatives that are driven by the UK Government in London in areas relating to both tourism (through UK-wide agencies such as Visit Britain) and workforce planning and development where UK-wide economic and employment initiatives (represented by the Sector Skills Council, People 1st) operate alongside those of the Scottish Government. Nevertheless, our two jurisdictions do have common roots in a political, institutional, and cultural context, and, in selecting them, we are informed by an analogous comparative justification in a study of Canada and South Africa in the work of Jain, Horwitz, and Wilkin (2012).

Our exploratory approach was guided by previous analyses of public policy documentation (e.g., Homeshaw, 1995; Pross, 1992). Informed by the literature, a comprehensive list of keywords, Boolean and string-search terms were methodically operationalized in web searches across both jurisdictions and recorded in a search log (Jansen, 2006; Stenmark & Jadaan, 2006). In this search log some preliminary coding was conducted (e.g., document type, ownership, and target audience). Concurrently, a document catalogue was developed, by modifying templates designed for previous work in the allied tourism industry policy space (see Whitford, 2009).

The document catalogue served as the key analytical tool for this study as it facilitated the classification and then deeper interrogation of the retrieved policy and planning documents.

Source material for our analysis in Australia is drawn, primarily, from the "top tier" of possible analysis in the form of federal reports, which are in turn informed by the specific contexts of the individual states and territories, which vary greatly in relation to their WD environment for tourism. Future analysis, not undertaken for this article, will address the range of state-specific sources that focus on the labor market and WD challenges faced by tourism at a regional level in Australia. Scotland's status, by contrast, is evolving through a process of increased devolution towards possible (but contested) independence as a unitary state. As part of the UK, Scotland's position is within what Elazar (1997) calls a polity formed by accident, with the result that it is neither part of a unitary state in the Napoleonic vision for France nor genuinely part of a federal relationship in the American or Australian sense. The Scottish source material, therefore, is arguably more "bottom tier" in its scope and remit, thus recognizing the problems of regionalism that Loughlin (2000) highlights as a limitation to national policy making in contemporary Western Europe. This, therefore, excludes consideration of wider UK analysis within which Scotland may be either fully incorporated or identified as a subunit of analysis. It also steps back from consideration of the growing role of pan-European HRD policies and implementation initiatives, which, in time, will influence Scottish approaches in this area (Nyhan, 2001). Similarly, Australia's future engagement with Asia-Pacific and its broader political imperatives is likely to affect domestic policy in the near future, as evidenced by the relaxation of visa and temporary work permit restrictions noted earlier in this article.

Findings of the study

Reviewing the Documents

Two overarching documents provide the tourism policy and development context for our analysis of workforce considerations in Australia and Scotland. They are the tourism policy commitments of the respective governments. Australia's underpinning National Long-Term Tourism Strategy has a bespoke section on Labour and Skills within which ambition is encapsulated as follows (Australian Government, 2009):

> Government and industry by focusing on tourism and hospitality skills and using the Tourism and Hospitality Development Workforce Strategy, could achieve a more integrated approach to skills development and retention. Urgent consideration needs to be given to how the skills and training needs of the industry can be best recognised and progressed. (p. 9)

Correspondingly, the Tourism and Hospitality Development Workforce Strategy (Service Skills Australia, 2009) is a complementary response to the national tourism strategy, generated by Service Skills Australia, a not-for-profit, independent organization, which is one of 11 Industry Skills Councils established by Government. The Workforce Strategy report provides a centerpiece around which the wider documentary population that we have analyzed is clustered.

In the case of Scotland, the overarching document is "Scottish Tourism: The Next Decade. A Tourism Framework for Change" (Scottish Executive, 2006). In this document, workforce concerns are articulated as: "Our ambition is to have the best regarded tourism workforce in the world, with highly skilled managers and leaders who nurture and value their staff" (p. 22); followed by a number of broad swathe aspirational outcomes, focusing on training, management development, and the provision of affordable housing for tourism employees in more remote areas. While no bespoke workforce strategy for Scotland can be linked directly to this policy statement, the closest to this emanates from the UK-wide People 1st agency, the sector skills council for hospitality, passenger transport, travel, and tourism. People 1st's approach in their analysis gives priority to UK-wide analysis, although they also do recognize regional variation through Scottish industry profiles.

The population frame for our analysis identified 164 potentially pertinent Australian documents for the period 2000 to 2012 (of which 160 were available for hardcopy or electronic access) and 50 for Scotland for the same period, all of which were accessed. After considerable analysis and debate

within our research teams, these documents were classified into

- Primary 1: Tourism workforce-related policy and planning documents.
- Primary 2: Tourism policy and planning documents that include reference to workforce issues.
- Primary 3: Workforce-related policy and planning documents that include reference to tourism.

The focus of this exploratory research was on Primary 1 sources only, of which we identified and were able to access 24 documents in Australia and 34 in Scotland. Delving beyond these threshold numbers would have limited the potential of our analysis to include both a measure of breadth and all-important depth. Table 1 summarizes the core information relating to the documents scrutinized. In relation to their date of publication and source of publication, there is indication of some discrepancies between Australia and Scotland, both relating to timeline of publication and the prime drivers behind publication. The timeline of engagement in tourism workforce issues highlights the topicality of concern in both jurisdictions, with the 2009–2012 period stimulating a significant increase in analysis, policy debate, and planning compared to the previous 8 years, perhaps reflecting significant (but very different) economic and workforce changes in both locations. The early phase of our analysis period (2000–2005) saw a virtual absence of engagement in this area in Australia at the national level, possibly determined by the Federal political environment of the time. By contrast, over 20% of the Scottish documents were published during this period.

Table 1 also highlights disparity with respect to the origin of reports and other workforce documents. The private sector has no evident leadership role in this area in Scotland whereas there is some evidence of concern leading to action in Australia. However, the dominant source of engagement in debate about workforce issues in both jurisdictions is government (the single most important source in Scotland) and public agencies (accounting for over 60% of Australian documents analyzed).

Understanding the Documents

Table 2 reports further background information of the documents analyzed. The type of documents included in our study represents a spread in terms of purpose, with policy papers representing over 30% of documents in both Australia and Scotland. A broad category of "position papers" is strongly represented in both locations, at 50% in Scotland and a higher proportion in Australia. Research objectives are more frequently articulated in the Scottish documentation.

The dominant process employed in the preparation of the documents that we included in the study includes consultation with perceived key stakeholders, although a clear minority in both locations did not employ this methodology. Table 2 also identifies the range of the contributory actors, with public sector concerns dominating alongside industry associations and private sector operators. Academic

Table 1
Documents Analyzed by Date and Source

	Australia [*n* (%)]	Scotland [*n* (%)]
Documents analyzed		
Published 2000–2002	1 (4.2)	5 (14.7)
Published 2003–2005	0 (0.0)	3 (8.8)
Published 2006–2008	7 (29.2)	9 (26.5)
Published 2009–2012	16 (66.7)	17 (50.0)
Total	24 (100.0)	34 (100.0)
Publisher		
Government department/ministries	5 (20.8)	20 (58.8)
NGOs/public agencies	15 (62.5)	14 (41.2)
Private sector bodies	4 (16.7)	0 (0.0)

Table 2
Documents Analyzed by Type, Participation, and Use of Research

	Australia [*n* (%)]	Scotland [*n* (%)]
Focus of document		
Position paper	14 (58.3)	17 (50.0)
Policy	8 (33.3)	13 (38.2)
Research	1 (4.2)	4 (11.8)
Lobbying document	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)
Total	34 (100.0)	34 (100.0)
Participants in/advisors to studies (actors)		
NGOs/public agencies	11 (45.8)	17 (50.0)
Government ministries	11 (45.8)	14 (41.2)
None	9 (37.5)	14 (41.2)
Private sector/trade—individuals	12 (50.0)	10 (29.4)
Private sector/trade—organizations	13 (54.2)	9 (26.5)
Academics	5 (20.8)	2 (5.9)
Consultants	5 (20.8)	0 (0.0)
Others	5 (20.8)	0 (0.0)
Study methodology		
None	2 (8.3)	17 (50.0)
Secondary research	21 (87.5)	11 (32.4)
Primary research/data collection	7 (29.2)	5 (14.7)
Stakeholder consultative meetings/focus groups	10 (41.7)	5 (14.7)

researchers play a limited role in the consultation process but, in Australia, there is a greater likelihood to engage "outside of the box" and utilize the thinking of those without a direct, vested stakeholding in the tourism workforce area.

Finally, in Table 2, the broad methodological approaches in the documents surveyed are identified. Half of the Scottish documents show no evidence of engagement with either existing sources (secondary research) or primary data collection in support of their analysis and discussion. By contrast, Australian approaches are much more likely to be underpinned by primary or secondary research alongside formal stakeholder consultation processes.

We were also interested in the wider context that framed the commissioning of the documents. In Australia, the dominant theme is one of skills shortages in the tourism sector, specifically highlighted in 13 of the 24 documents reviewed as the main driver, with two including specific reference to regional issues. The allied issue of skills and training is identified in a further five documents with the balance (six) reflecting a range of issues that draws on this central theme, such as the recruitment of international labor and the image of the industry. The skew of publication dates towards the latter end of the 2000–2012 timeframe in Australia clearly influenced the tenor of these documents, as the Australian economy faced increasing competition for both skilled and unskilled labor across the economy (Australian Government, 2010). Dominant theming in the purposes articulated within the Scottish documents, by contrast, is in the area of economic development, investment, regional development, and employment creation, with little evident change to the mix of focus over the 2000–2012 timeframe, reflecting the somewhat different economic priorities in Scotland at the time.

Outcomes and Recommendations in the Documents

Table 3 focuses on the recommendations of the reports addressed in this study, not so much in terms of the content but rather to whom the documents that we analyzed were "talking." What is striking is that most of the sources we considered do address multiple stakeholders; there is clear recognition that "solving" tourism's workforce concerns are the responsibility of a range of actors within the public and private sectors and that collaborative approaches are probably going to be required.

Table 3
Outcomes: Where Are the Recommendations Targeted?

Recommendations to:	Australia [*n* (%)]	Scotland [*n* (%)]
Government	15 (18.8)	11 (15.7)
NGOs/public agencies	17 (21.3)	14 (20.0)
Private sector/trade associations or organizations	17 (21.3)	1 (1.4)
Private sector operators/businesses	15 (18.8)	25 (35.7)
Education/training providers	14 (17.5)	19 (27.1)
Consultants	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Others	2 (2.5)	0 (0.0)

There is a clear and dominant focus on recommendations to government, NGOs/public agencies, the private sector and education/training providers in both Australia and Scotland. Where the two jurisdictions diverge, however, is with respect to private sector/trade associations or organizations that figure strongly in Australia and are virtually absent in Scotland. A stronger role for these bodies has already been flagged in Table 3, as they play a role in instigating/publishing documents in Australia but, as we can see in Table 2, in Scotland private sector/trade associations or organizations play a role in the study process but are not identified as actors to take matters forward.

More detailed analysis of the recommendations emanating from the documents surveyed highlights clear patterns with respect to their focus. In Scotland, the emphasis within recommendations is overwhelmingly on skills development and the organizational climate and architecture that surrounds the skills arena in tourism. Within this context, then, the focus is on

- Qualifications—availability, access, and participation (5).
- Management and leadership (7).
- Customer service development (11).
- Professional culinary skills development (8).
- Training that is demand led by industry rather than supply led by educational/training providers (2).

Additional dimensions with less of a skills emphasis are highlighted in a 2010 Scottish Government report as to "improve appeal and attract new talent," a theme echoing concerns and recommendations in a further nine documents. There is also reference to workforce retention in a 2006 government study, which expresses achievement aspirations in the areas identified above alongside recommendations. There is also limited recognition of the need for strategic workforce planning in a 2009 report that highlights the workforce implications of major events such as the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow but does not propose specific steps to be taken in response to this need.

The dominant theme among Australian recommendations, anticipating and then building on the 2009 National Long-Term Tourism Strategy, is on recruitment and retention issues, focusing on direct strategies [within schools, through foreign worker programs, by moving beyond traditional youth recruitment pools (e.g., reengaging retirees)] and underpinning support for more effective recruitment (information systems, research). There is recognition of the particular criticality of this issue in the context of those regions where competition from the resources sector is particularly acute. There are also links into areas such as employment legislation and training for new markets, such as China, in a 2011 recent study.

Reference to skills concerns are more specifically targeted in Australia than appears to be the case in Scotland, designed to equip nontraditional workforce pools with the requisite capabilities to work in tourism. Other environmental factors, such as the strong Australian currency, have taken the edge of the immediacy of WD for tourism. Inbound tourism has slowed given the exchange rate, outbound tourism is solid for the same reason, and hence domestic tourism is lagging. Nonetheless, preparedness for new markets, China in particular as just flagged, is being hindered mostly in remote and regional destinations, many of them already struggling to compete with the resources sector

for available and accessible labor markets, training and development resources, and infrastructure and accessibility. Many of the documents in our analysis, especially those published post-2006, ruminate over these issues.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our exploratory analysis provides a 12-year timeline of policy, planning, and implementation documents related to the tourism workforce in Australia and Scotland. It gives a sense of the extent of public and private sector engagement in the area within the two jurisdictions over the period in question and highlights the peaks and troughs of engagement by governments, NGOs, and the private sector. The analysis also indicates the key actors within the process and the focus of outcomes in terms of recommendations.

The volume of engagement in workforce-related policy discourse in the tourism sector in both jurisdictions, framed by both public and private sector stakeholders, points to clear manifestation of the application of ALMPs in both Australia and Scotland. Policies and implementation strategies point to measures addressing both labor market demand and supply-side remedies and possible responses. There is some, but relatively limited, recognition of the relationship between ALMPs and wider policy domains (as highlighted by both Hemerijck & Schludi, 2000, and Boyle, 2005) with some exceptions linking to areas such as immigration and housing policy.

Around the world, labor market policies and practice are widely articulated, at national and regional levels, through public and published reports and strategies that encapsulate political and engagement agendas with greater or lesser "buy-in" from key stakeholder groups. Our analysis, in this article, is of such public statements of policy, planning, and implementation strategies that emanate from a relatively narrow group of stakeholders in the public and private sectors in Australia and Scotland, these stakeholders often acting in consort and partnership and with the (unstated) aim of private sector interests to utilize such statements as a symbolic plea for government attention and public resources.

In parallel, we see such analytical engagement (resulting in policy and implementation reports) by government and its agencies as evidence of Bonoli's (2010) first type of ALMPs in both case jurisdictions and note, by way of contrast, the absence of comparable national engagement in the US within tourism as evidence of a more laissez-faire approach to the industry and its workforce needs. We argue that ALMPs, at their implementation stage, require the foundations of research and stakeholder policy engagement in order to achieve desired outcomes, whether positive in a human capital sense or more negatively designed to coerce change in employment status. We raise questions about the contribution that this very specific form of ALMP engagement makes to moving analysis and its attendant discourse forward within an workplace environment where change is slow (Baum, 2007) and that offers up limited evidence for optimism that key stakeholders have the desire or capacity to make a difference. Indeed, we have empathy with Keep's (2009) concern, expressed in the context of wider low-skill, routinized work, that polarized employment is here to stay and that responses through, in particular, education and training cannot change the workplace reality of an industry such as tourism. Therefore, we question whether workforce development needs in tourism are really addressed through what we find to be a litany of "same again" analyses and reports that appear to be stuck within a WD paradigm that offers little by way of new thinking and that, collectively, do not appear to have made a substantive contribution to change within the tourism workforce environment in either Australia or Scotland.

In reviewing these concerns, we are also reminded by Boyle (2005) that "one cannot separate analysis of policies from the institutions through which they are developed, modified and delivered" (p. 1). Boyle builds on this when he continues by highlighting problem-induced policy development approaches through which "policy is seen as reactive not routine: problem/failure induces episodic search. . . . Learning (mobilising institutionally nested ideas) is important, as is the role of boundary-spanning institutions which structure the policy discourse by shaping the perceptions of actors with regard to what is desirable and feasible" (p. 17).

Therefore, to see our interest in workforce policy and planning considerations within the internal context of one sector (tourism) in isolation is to miss the wider environmental influences that impact on

the sector. It is important to interpret policy considerations of this nature within a broader stakeholder but also contextual frame. Hemerijck and Schludi (2000) rightly emphasize that the sources of policy problems in any one policy network include not just exogenous shocks—economic/demographic change—but also reflect endogenous spill-over caused by dysfunctional policy in a neighboring policy area. In the case of our analysis here, these may be in terms of failures within the education system or the consequences of immigration policy. Hemerijck and Schludi further argue that the extent to which policy-making institutions are tightly coupled, loosely coupled, or decoupled is significant in the ways in which policies are formulated and, subsequently, implemented. WD or HRD, at both organizational and national levels, exists within a multiple stakeholder environment. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2010) highlights the need to engage all levels within an organization in the process and mechanics of workforce planning. Garavan (1995) highlights internal stakeholders within companies (owners, managers, employees, HR specialists) alongside wider interests external to the company—in his Irish case, national training agencies, trade unions, training providers, and government. Garavan, Heraty, and Morley (1998) refer to increasing interest in a network/actor perspective which "conceptualizes HRD as a dynamic network of interactions between different actors and interest groups. It is based on the premise that HRD actors continuously engage in variable relationships that jointly influence HRD processes, strategies and outcomes" (p. 115). Kraak (2003) takes this discussion further when he highlights the role of social institutions as key actors within the WD process by arguing that "HRD is, fundamentally, a collective good which requires large-scale investments in education and training infrastructure that go way beyond the means of any single stakeholder or, indeed, the market mechanism" (p. 3). Kraak's analysis, underpinned by the notion of actors within the WD process, is important in the context of our analysis that policy and planning for WD in tourism, in both jurisdictions within our study, are the outcome of networked processes engaging actors or stakeholders from the public, private, and NGO sectors in a series of actions over an extended timeframe.

Despite the noted differences between the two jurisdictions, our analysis leads to conclusions that highlight the following commonalities with respect to tourism WD policy and planning in both Australia and Scotland:

- Repetition of concerns and repetition in outcomes—interrogation of the context, purpose and recommendations within the documents and reports over the time frame highlights dominant themes in the recommendations. Broad-swathe concerns about skills and the specific vocational areas where skills enhancement is required in Scotland features in reports over the full time frame. Likewise, workforce recruitment and retention dominate the Australian agenda. Recognition of previous studies is virtually nonexistent so that each report appears to address its core themes as if these represented original analysis and thinking.
- Engagement of a broad swathe of stakeholders in the processes through which analysis is undertaken and conclusions derived. This appears to point to successful adoption of the tenets of Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory within the engagement process. However, the conclusions and recommendations within the documents commonly include items that sit incongruously together at best and are economically and practically incompatible at worst.
- Stakeholder engagement involves a diversity of actors as part of the consultation processes most of the studies adopt. Therefore, they are susceptible to influence by different voices at different times, representing varied interests (subsectoral, regional) and reacting to changing circumstances within the workforce and tourism environments. The lack of common voices and actors within the process over time impinges on the quality and consistency of the messages that emanate from the reports and restricts their value as more than a "here and now" perspective on their environment.
- Recommendations place preponderant responsibility for action on government and its agencies, particularly through training interventions at tertiary and postexperience development levels—in other words, predicated upon the unchallenged assumption that any identified training will be undertaken by schools, colleges, and HEIs and

will be paid for by the state. These documents therefore have the character of a "letter to Father Christmas" wish list, rather than offering a real plan for action.

- The absence of comparability between studies over the time frame: methods, actors, audiences. In both Australia and Scotland, each study and analysis appears to adopt its own definitions of, for example, the tourism industry and the parameters of its sectors. There is also no consistency in terms of the methods adopted or routes followed in order to reach outcomes and conclusions. Thus, a key value of a series of studies conducted over an extended time frame, that of comparability and the establishment of trend data, is entirely absent with respect to both the Australian and Scottish reports.
- Lack of accountability/follow-up with respect to reports and their recommendations. This is a key finding as there is little evidence that the outcomes of policy, planning, and workforce implementation reports include tangible outcomes for which there is individual or organizational accountability. Indeed, clear and enforceable action-based outcomes are few and far between in the documents addressed in this study, so that, however laudable the intended outcomes may be, there is no accountability or follow-up trail in evidence.
- As a consequence, there is little evidence of impact with respect to the reports and other documents that were analyzed in this study. The investment in time and frequently public money along with the expertise of actors would appear to be resources poorly directed in affecting real change in the workforce environment of either Australia or Scotland.

This study has raised serious questions about the efficacy and value of workforce studies with a policy, planning, development, and implementation purpose within tourism in both Australia and Scotland. Our exploratory investigation into a significant body of documentation in both jurisdictions suggests poor return on investment and a systemic failure to learn from the experience of previous engagements with similar concerns, despite the fact that the same agencies and individuals appear repeatedly within the process. There is also evidence in both Australia and Scotland of the influence of prevailing and changing workforce priorities in response to economic pressures (in opposite directions over the time frame), but the outcomes in terms of proposed actions do not appear to change significantly as a consequence. It would be valuable to pursue parallel studies of the workforce development discourse in other sectors of the economy in both jurisdictions.

Limitations and Future Research

Any exploratory study of this nature faces limitations in terms of both its scope and the analytical framework that is employed. While our chosen locations are jurisdictionally rather different, they have provided case examples of tourism WD policy in action but cannot be taken to represent wider practice in other countries. That is, perhaps, the agenda for another research day. At the same time, we argue that Australia and Scotland represent two locations for which tourism is a key economic sector and features strongly within political debate; where WD support systems are relatively sophisticated in a bureaucratic sense and have evolved over an extended time frame, albeit with clearly differentiated outcomes; and where wider economic change has and continues to impact significantly on both the tourism and workforce domains, again in very different ways. Therefore, the differing experiences of Australia and Scotland provide clear opportunity to engage with the core concern of our study.

At a practical level, the main challenge we faced in this study was in terms of the selection of documents. The field under consideration is not one of clear boundaries as both tourism and WD interrelate with a much wider economic, social, and cultural world. This wider galaxy certainly includes published analysis that addresses themes of relevance to our study. We made the considered decision, at this stage in our study, to focus on core documentation and sought to apply common rules of selection to both locations. The nature of jurisdictional boundaries in both Australia and Scotland are such that even this process threw up anomalies and ambiguities and we were forced to make a small number of pragmatic judgments with regard to inclusion/exclusion. Our intention is to compensate for these, in future interrogations of our collected data, through a process of greater spread and depth of documents for analysis,

in particular to include Primary 2 and 3 level documents. We also called upon judgment in allocating documents, agencies, and actors according to preagreed categories to enable work to progress within both teams simultaneously. Tourism industry and WD language and the functional titles and roles of actors, for example, are not used consistently in the documents that we analyzed and thus there may be some consequences from this for the analysis and conclusions we present.

Clearly, this theme is one that demands further exploration in considerably greater depth than this initial survey has permitted. Mining to greater depth within our Australian and Scottish studies will likely yield further and valuable insights. Both localizing the unit of analysis to the state level (in the case of Australia) and expanding it to the wider UK context (in the case of Scotland) will also help provide an understanding of how the body of information we analyzed relates to the wider context in which the studies are located. Finally, there is also scope to replicate this process in differing contexts and jurisdictions where the relationship between tourism and workforce policy, planning, development, and implementation may be very different.

Concluding Remarks

This article charts our analysis of ALMPs in practice within two jurisdictions and one industry sector. It highlights the application of ALMPs that appear to have limited impact, a failure to critically evaluate such impacts or to learn from previous consideration of similar issues within the policy space. It also points to the limitations of inclusive stakeholder engagement, however politically desirable such approaches may be, resulting in incompatible outcomes. Finally, the application of longitudinal analysis of policy formulation and stakeholder engagement in tourism workforce issues over a 12-year period highlights the level of reactiveness to the immediate pressures of the economic cycle and the failure to give serious consideration to the long-term implications of changing labor markets in both Australia and Scotland.

As a final reflection, what strikes us most profoundly, as we conclude this analysis, is not so much what is said within the documents that we considered but what is not said. Particularly striking is the almost total absence to the fundamental, systemic, and structural issues that are very much the "elephant in the room" in any consideration of WD issues in tourism. These, as we have said, represent a bundle that contains the sector's status as an employer, problems in recruitment and failure to retain good employees, the impact of stochastic demand on career opportunities, remuneration, workplace conditions, and employee participation. This serious gap emphasizes the reality that consideration of skills remains divorced from wider employment relations and labor market structures and issues. Until key public and private sector stakeholders show a willingness to debate these issues and recognize their consequences, the hot air surrounding policy and implementation strategies will remain of limited value in taking what is an important agenda forward.

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